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Diana T Fritz 02/20/2007 04:53:39 PM From DB/Inbox: Diana T Fritz

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Text:

UNCLAS ABU DHABI 00273

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INFO: PAO MEPI ECON POL FCS DCM

DISSEMINATION: AMB
CHARGE: PROG

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INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE

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STATE FOR DRL, ECA, G/IWI, NEA/ARP

E.O. 12958: DECL: N/A
TAGS: [KWMN](#) [KMPI](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [AE](#)
SUBJECT: NOMINATION FOR INTERNATIONAL WOMAN OF COURAGE AWARD

REF: SECSTATE 12871

¶1. Post nominates Dr. Houriya Kazim to receive the Secretary of State's Award for International Women of Courage. Following is her information:

Name: Dr. Houriya Kazim
Title: Consultant General Surgeon (Breast Diseases), and Director of Well Woman Clinic.
Tel: +971-04-332-7117
Fax: +971-04-332-7107
Email: wwc@emirates.net.ae

Justification:

Dr. Kazim was the UAE's first female surgeon, in a profession locally dominated by men. She has been a significant force for breast cancer awareness in a country where the very subject is largely taboo. Dr. Kazim attended medical school at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland where she obtained her fellowship in General Surgery before sub-specializing in Surgical Oncology, and focused particularly on breast surgery and reconstruction. She was also a fellow at the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas. Amid all the social conservatism, lack of awareness and an essentially male-dominated arena, the UAE was desperately in need of a woman specialist for breast cancer -- the foremost lethal disease among middle aged women worldwide. Women in the UAE hesitate to have their breasts examined due to the scarcity of female doctors. Dr. Kazim specialized in Surgical Oncology --specifically breast surgery. Although in many western countries such a choice would not have been an issue of note, in a traditional and conservative society like the UAE it was a tremendous step outside what was seen as socially and culturally appropriate. The social stigma about a woman losing her breasts to cancer adds an additional layer of complexity. Although no official data exists on the number of women suffering from breast cancer in the UAE, many are diagnosed here but are forced to seek treatment abroad.

Dr Kazim is dedicated to promoting awareness of breast cancer in the region despite cultural and social pressures. She established the first breast cancer support group in the UAE -- "Breast Friends" -- which meets monthly in Dubai and offers a varied program of both education and support. The group has also implemented a buddy system for those having their five to six weeks radiation therapy in Al Ain. Despite the UAE being generally advanced in medical technology, women can only receive two of the three steps of treatment (surgery and chemotherapy) in Dubai. During their third phase of therapy, women suffering from breast cancer need to have radiation therapy. Participation at Breast Friends makes it possible to be driven by another member of the group to Al Ain every day for the above-mentioned period of time, instead of taking a public bus or driving themselves.

In addition to founding the breast cancer support group, she has also established a Breast Cancer Foundation -- the Dr. Houriya Kazim Breast Cancer Research Fund -- a non-profit organization for education, research and financial support of breast cancer. She is also the founder and director of the Well Woman Clinic in Dubai, a clinic only for women with only women doctors on staff.

Dr. Kazim has also pushed against another local prejudice as an Emirati woman married to a non-Emirati. She is married to an American journalist.

¶2. Hilary Olsin-Windecker is the Emboff following women's issues at post, tel: +971-2-414-2332, fax: +971-2-414-2442.

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